

**- LAMINITIS -**

Feeding the Laminitic Horse

The Importance of Fibre

Horses and ponies are hindgut fermenters, meaning their digestive system is designed to process large amounts of fibre. Fibre forms the cornerstone of a healthy diet, supporting digestive health and overall gut function. While starch and sugar are typically digested in the small intestine, excess amounts can pass into the hindgut, disrupting the microbial balance. This leads to rapid fermentation, increased lactic acid production, and a drop in pH levels.

An acidic environment in the hindgut can compromise the permeability of the gut wall, allowing dead bacteria and endotoxins to enter the bloodstream. This triggers an inflammatory response associated with laminitis. For this reason, it's crucial to select feeds that are low in sugar and starch.

Choosing the Right Feed

High-fibre feeds, particularly those containing ingredients like beet pulp, oat fibre, and lucerne, help maintain a healthy microbial balance in the hindgut. These ingredients create a functional barrier against toxins and promote overall gut health. Products like Speedi-Beet and Barastoc Fibre-Beet Mash are excellent choices. These super fibre beet pulp feeds are high in fibre and low in sugar and starch. They are ideal for horses and ponies prone to laminitis when included as part of a balanced diet.

Avoid High-Starch Diets

High-starch feeds, such as cereals and grain mixes, should be avoided as they can lead to weight gain and exacerbate laminitis. If weight gain is necessary, consult on of Barastoc's nutritionist or a veterinarian for advice on incorporating oil or safe conditioning feeds into the diet.

Feeding Practices

Feeding small, frequent meals alongside forage is a good practice for horses with laminitis. Maintaining consistent forage intake ensures the hindgut continues to function properly. If you're unsure about quantities, consult a nutritionist to tailor the feeding plan to your horse's specific needs.

When introducing changes to your horse's diet, do so gradually to allow their digestive system to adjust. Sudden dietary changes can cause colic and other digestive issues.

Top Tip:

Before turnout, consider feeding Speedi-Beet or Barastoc Fibre-Beet Mash to help stabilize the intake of sugars found in spring grass. This simple step can significantly reduce the risk of laminitis triggered by grazing.

